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Corporate Diplomacy and Political CSR: Similarities, Differences and Theoretical Implications

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to systematically review the body of knowledge on corporate diplomacy (CD) and political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) in journals from the fields of public relations, public diplomacy, general management and business ethics. By applying an interdisciplinary approach our study aims to (1) examine what definitions of CD and PCSR exist, (2) explore what theories have been applied to CD and PCSR and, (3) find differences and commonalities between the underlying concepts of CD and PCSR. Building on the results of our review, we redefine each construct and develop a theoretical framework of CD, which integrates PCSR, international public relations and public diplomacy. Our results serve as a foundation for an operationalization of the constructs in order to conduct empirical analyses and contribute to current research on the political role of multinational corporations.

Keywords

Corporate Diplomacy – Public Diplomacy – Political Corporate Social Responsibility – Public Relations

1. Introduction

Due to globalization, multinational companies have increasing power in international politics (Molleda, 2011; Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009). At the same time, business actors are increasingly put under pressure, in particular by the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Muldoon, 2005). As a result, corporate legitimacy and good relationships with stakeholders in a company's host country become a key challenge for the survival of international businesses. Therefore, multinational corporations assume new socio-political responsibilities and develop new communications and public relations (PR) strategies including corporate diplomacy (CD) (White,

2015; Mogensen, 2017; Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009). By engaging in CD, multinational companies are able to respond to changing social expectations and to grow their legitimacy and influence in their host countries (Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009). Moreover, CD is a highly valuable approach for public diplomacy (PD), since multinational companies have the power and the resources to contribute to the national interests of their host countries (Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009).

While the number of research articles on CD has increased substantially in the last few years, a systematic literature review of academic studies resulting in a comprehensive and distinctive definition of CD does not yet exist. In addition, since most of the literature does little to theoretically embed CD, there is a need for further theory development on CD. Westermann-Behaylo, Rehbein, and Fort (2015) and White, Vanc, and Coman (2011) embed CD in political corporate social responsibility (PCSR) as a theoretical framework and emphasize that the application of PCSR theory helps to “enrich the usage of the term corporate diplomacy, [...] [and] to develop a broader perspective of corporate diplomacy” (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015, p. 390). Similarly, Molleda (2011, p. 275) illustrates CD by relating it to corporate social responsibility “as a political practice” in terms of PCSR. The latter, regarded as corporate governance activities (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011) and defined as corporate participation in political decision-making in the company’s host country (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015), shows similarities to CD. However, the ways in which PCSR theory might further develop the understanding and theoretical foundation of CD are rarely explored.

To address these deficits in the literature, the current study aims to review journal articles from academic journals as well as related monographs from the fields of PR, PD, general management and business ethics, which have been identified as major outlets for CD and PCSR research (Frynas & Stephens, 2015; Mogensen, 2017; Scherer & Palazzo, 2011; White, 2012, 2015). By systematically examining articles and book contributions, this study identifies common threads and assumptions relating to both terms and discusses similarities and differences. Building on our findings, we aim to contribute to PR and PD research by developing a clear and distinctive definition of CD. This provides the foundation for future empirical analyses examining CD usage and effects, analyses which to date are rare (Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017; White, 2015). Furthermore, our paper strives to advance theory building in PR and PD research by developing an

integrative theoretical framework of CD. Lastly, the paper discusses theoretical and practical implications and offers future research directions.

2. Conceptual framework

PR and PD research have emphasized the fundamental significance of CD for several years. For example, Robert Grupp, former president of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), describes the function of CD as being that “the company extends the reach of its relationships to include groups, cultures, organisations, even governments, which don’t necessarily involve the company or client directly but which ultimately affect the sustainability of the business” (Macnamara, 2012, p. 320). Similarly, Molleda (2011, p. 274) highlights that both PR and PD contribute to CD by stating that CD is “the interplay between public relations and public diplomacy”. Thus, PR and PD form the conceptual framework of this paper and will be presented in the following section. Subsequently, we will give a brief introduction to the core concepts of the current paper, which are CD and PCSR. Building on the brief literature review, we identify existing research gaps and state our research questions.

2.1 Public relations and public diplomacy

While PR research was for a long time dominated by a functionalist-managerial paradigm, a few scholars called for the embedding of PR in its social and political context (e.g., Ihlen, Fredriksson, & van Ruler, 2009; Sandhu, 2009; Tsetsura, 2010). As organizational legitimacy is crucial for an organization’s survival, we follow the argument that legitimacy is a core function of PR, particularly evident in reflective PR (Hoffjann, 2011; Holmström, 2010; van Ruler & Vercic, 2005) and neo-institutional PR (Frandsen & Johansen, 2013; Fredriksson, Pallas, & Wehmeier, 2013; Merckelsen, 2013; Sandhu, 2009).

Van Ruler and Vercic (2005, p. 253) argue that reflective PR is a “strategic process of viewing an organization from the outside, or public view”. In a constant reflective communication process of meaning creation, organizations can obtain and maintain their societal legitimacy ascribed by internal and external stakeholders. Similarly, Hoffjann (2011) describes the function of PR as enabling an organization to reflect on its relations to its social environment. In a similar way, neo-institutional approaches to PR consider the relationship between an organization and its social environment as central (Frandsen & Johansen, 2013; Sandhu, 2009). The core argument of

neo-institutionalism is that organizations are embedded in their organizational fields facing heterogeneous expectations, which are a result of socially constructed norms and values concerning how an organization should act. In order to gain legitimacy, organizations use PR to analyze their environment and its demands and to demonstrate that they are in line with the rules and expectations as required (Sandhu, 2009). The congruence between stakeholders and the organization can positively influence organizational legitimation. As such, PR can contribute to both the organization *and* its environments.

The second research field forming the conceptual framework for our study is PD. Public diplomacy was traditionally understood as the communication and negotiation between governments (Deutsch, 1966). However, more recently, PD has become understood as no longer being carried out by governments alone, but also as a function of a variety of non-state actors such as international companies, NGOs and activist groups (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Gilboa, 2008; Gregory, 2011; Zaharna, 2010). Therefore, Gilboa (2008, p. 58) defines PD as the process “where state and nonstate actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies”. PD objectives include relationship building with key publics (Gregory, 2011; Leonard, 2002; Nye, 2008), advancing organizational interests (Gregory, 2011) and supporting the image of the home country (Fitzpatrick, 2007; White, 2012). PD research applies “a considerable range of theoretical perspectives” (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016) originating from different academic disciplines including PR. Since the long term goal of PD is a valuable relationship between the involved actors (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Gilboa, 2008), the current paper adopts the relational approach to PD and defines it as “an international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public [...and] as creator and facilitator of networks and relationships ” (Cull, 2008, p. 31-32).

The convergence between PD and PR has been noted by several scholars (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Gilboa, 2008; Grunig, 1993; L’Etang, 2009; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; van Ham, 2002) and the commonalities and differences have been discussed by both PR and PD literature (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Gilboa, 2008; Macnamara, 2012). As L’Etang (2009, p. 608) points out, both PR and PD “are responsible for official institutional communications with other organizations and relations with wider groups or publics and are responsive to public opinion and media coverage.” Due to the commonalities of PR and PD in their actions and objectives with regards to relationship

management and improving the perception of an organization (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Macnamara, 2012), both research fields can contribute to a comprehensive definition of CD.

2.2 Political CSR research in corporate diplomacy

Previous studies have related CD to PCSR (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015; White et al., 2011) and suggested embedding CD in a PCSR framework, since PCSR recognizes “the power of corporations in society and the responsible use of power in the political arena” (White et al., 2011, p. 283). In fact, social power and political responsibilities are key aspects of CD (Mogensen, 2017; Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009). Moreover, the core challenges of CD lie in responding to social pressure through external stakeholders and meeting the expectations of (foreign) corporate stakeholders in order to gain legitimacy (Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009; Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017). One way to deal with external stakeholder pressure in a host country is to engage with social, political and environmental issues in order to make a contribution to global regulation, which the management and business ethics literature mainly defines as political CSR (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). However, while Westermann-Behaylo et al. (2015, p. 394) note that PCSR literature enhances CD by “emphasiz[ing] the importance of nonfinancial values [...] and the types of public responsibilities that corporations might undertake in conducting corporate diplomacy”, theoretical implications for CD in the realm of PCSR, PR and PD research are not sufficiently discussed.

2.3 Research questions

From the brief literature review, three research deficits can be derived, relating to a specific definition of CD, a comprehensive theoretical framework of CD, and, related to both these points, the contribution of PCSR to CD research. The current paper addresses these research gaps by extensively reviewing academic articles on CD and PCSR in the relevant disciplines including PR and PD. This allows us to compare and link existing approaches to both constructs and finally to derive distinctive definitions of both terms and to build a theoretical framework of CD integrating PCSR, PR and PD. Thus, the current paper posits the following research questions: (1) How does academic literature define CD and PCSR? (2) What theories are applied to CD and PCSR? (3) What similarities and differences between the approaches to CD and PCSR can be found in academic literature?

3. Methodology

In order to identify existing definitions and theories on CD and PCSR, a systematic review was conducted. This method allows multiple specific questions to be addressed, accomplishes an extensive analysis of the reviewed literature and is increasingly used in PR research (Ki & Ye, 2017; Verčič et al., 2015; Volk, 2016). In addition, this method improves “the quality of the review process by establishing a systematic, transparent and reproducible literature review” (Bapuji, Crossan, Jiang, & Rouse, 2007, p. 3). In line with prior research (Verčič, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2015; Walker, 2010), the current systematic review followed the five-step approach suggested by Walker (2010), which was extended by the data collection as a third step (see Volk, 2010, who also included this step in her systematic review). Based on this, our method includes the following six steps: (1) key word and term identification, (2) article/study identification, (3) data collection, (4) assessment of quality criteria, (5) data extraction and (6) synthesis of the data. Each of the steps will be further described in the following.

3.1 Key word and term identification

Our aim was to review journal articles and monographs that explicitly defined either the term “corporate diplomacy” or “political CSR”. Thus, we searched solely for these key terms and their abbreviations and excluded similar or related constructs. Therefore, the key words are “corporate diplomacy”, “political corporate social responsibility” and “political CSR”.

3.2 Article and study identification

As the current study aims to examine how CD and PCSR are described in different disciplines, we followed previous studies identifying general management, business ethics and political economy as most important for PCSR (Frynas & Stephens, 2015) and PR and PD as highly relevant for CD (Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009; White, 2015). We identified eight leading journals in *general management* (Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Organization Science, Organization Studies and Strategic Management Journal), five leading journals in the field of *business ethics* (Journal of Business Ethics, Business Ethics Quarterly, Corporate Governance: An International Review, Business & Society and Accounting,

Organizations and Society), and four leading journals in *political economy* (Business and Politics, International Affairs, Socio-Economic Review and Journal of Economics & Management Strategy), which represent top international journals in the field of business and management (Scimago Journal and Country Rank, 2018) and refer to PCSR (Frynas & Stephens, 2015). In the field of *PR*, we selected seven leading journals (Journal of Public Relations Research, Public Relations Review, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Communication Management, International Journal of Strategic Communication, Journal of International Communication, and International Communication Gazette) as these journals have been found to be major intellectual outlets in PR research (Botan & Taylor, 2004; Ki & Ye, 2017; Sallot, Lyon, Acosta-Alzuru, & Ogata Jones, 2003). Lastly, in the field of *PD* we selected four journals that are specialized in this field: Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, American Behavioral Scientist and International Journal of Communication (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016).

3.3 Data collection

In the next step, for the data collection a full-text online search was performed on the 28 journals. Therefore, the authors searched for the key words, which had to be named in the title, the abstract or in the full text, individually on each journal's archive on its website. Additional journal articles and books that were mentioned in the articles of the reviewed journals (see above) and contributed to the identification of basic assumptions and theories regarding the terms CD or PCSR were included in the data extraction and synthesis¹. This procedure allows for an exhaustive view on both terms and avoids the exclusion of important monographs and book chapters, which has been criticized in previous systematic reviews. For the journal articles, all articles we could retrieve up to December 2018 were analyzed. In total, the sample included 129 journal articles and three monographs in 32 journals from different disciplines, consisting of 25 articles and two monographs dealing with CD and 104 journal articles and one monograph exploring PCSR.

3.4 Assessment of quality criteria

¹ Thus, the number of journals increased, and additional monographs and articles published in Journal of General Management, Academy of Management Perspective, American Behavioral Scientist, Public Relations Inquiry and International Journal of Management Review were added to the current systematic review.

The next step of the systematic review was a quality assessment of the journal articles and book chapters that had been identified so far. The goal of this step is to reduce the initial sample size to include only the most relevant papers on CD and PCSR. Thus, firstly, those articles that were either published as an editorial, an academic announcement or a book review were excluded. Secondly, the full text of the remaining articles and book chapters were read in order to identify only those articles and book chapters that make a significant contribution to our research interest. In this way, we excluded all articles that only mentioned one of the examined terms without any further clarification (such as a definition or description). In the end, a final sample size of 74 journal articles and three monographs was identified, containing 15 journal articles and two monographs on CD and 59 journal articles and one monograph on PCSR.

3.5 Data extraction

After the data had been collected, there followed a data extraction step utilizing a standardized process. This step ensures the intersubjective comprehensibility of the research (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). We systematically reviewed all articles retrieved from the journals following a deductive-inductive approach. Building on previous systematic reviews (Verčič et al., 2015; Walker, 2010) and following our conceptual framework and research purpose, which is to define CD and PCSR and to explore theoretical frameworks of both constructs, we developed a data extraction form that contains: (1) journal name, (2) author(s), (3) year of publication, (4) given definition of CD/PCSR, (5) described goals of CD/PCSR, and (6) theories used (see table 2 and 3 in the appendix). The journal name, the authors' name and the year of publication were coded as stated in the article or monograph. Concerning the definition and the goals of either CD or PCSR, any definition or description that explicitly referred to CD or PCSR was coded as given in the text. Finally, with regards to the theory that was applied to the respective understanding of CD or PCSR, the name of the theory was coded in the data extraction form.

3.6 Synthesis of the data

In a last step, building on the raw data, the synthesis of the data was derived. In this, the assumption that PCSR and CD are defined differently according to academic disciplines directed the data analysis and synthesis. The intention of the analysis is to present the current knowledge of definitions including goals and theoretical approaches of CD and PCSR. Subsequently, the data

synthesis is aimed at comparing and linking the underlying concepts and theoretical approaches of CD and PCSR in order to find a common understanding and develop a distinctive definition of each term. The findings will then allow for the discussion of how PCSR can contribute to CD and to develop an integrative theoretical framework of CD.

4. Results

The analysis shows that more publications exist in the selected journals on PCSR (59 journal articles and one monograph) than on CD (15 journal articles and two monographs). Overall, out of the 32 journals that were suggested as major outlets for CD and PCSR research, only 18 contributed to our data synthesis as the others either did not mention or further describe CD or PCSR. Moreover, the analysis indicates that the term “corporate diplomacy” was most discussed in PR and PD journals while “political CSR”/“political corporate social responsibility” was most described in general management and business ethics. Neither CD nor PCSR were mentioned at all in the political economy journals that were included in our sample. Table 1 presents which journals provided deeper insights on CD and PCSR and how many articles were published on CD or PCSR in each journal. In the following, the paper will firstly present the results on the given definitions of CD and PCSR and secondly outline the theories that were applied to CD and PCSR in our sample. An overview of the identified definitions of both terms and applied theories is presented in tables 4 and 5.

Discipline	Journal	Corporate diplomacy	Political CSR
General Management		3	19
	Academy of Management Review	0	4
	Academy of Management Perspective	1	2
	Journal of General Management	1	0
	Journal of Management Studies	0	7
	International Journal of Management Review	0	1
	Strategic Management Journal	1	0
	Organization Science	0	1
	Organization Studies	0	4
Business Ethics		2	38
	Journal of Business Ethics	1	27
	Business Ethics Quarterly	0	6
	Business & Society	1	5
Public Relations		5	2
	Public Relations Review	1	0
	Public Relations Inquiry	1	0
	Journal of Communication Management	2	0
	International Journal of Strategic Communication	1	2
Public Diplomacy		5	0
	Hague Journal of Diplomacy	2	0
	Place Branding and Public Diplomacy	2	0

American Behavioral Scientist	1	0
Total	15	59

Table 1. Number of journal articles on corporate diplomacy and political CSR according to discipline and journal

4.1. Definitions of corporate diplomacy and political CSR

4.1.1 Corporate diplomacy definitions

One approach to defining CD evolves from a management perspective, which is to understand CD as a management instrument of multinational corporations aimed at creating favorable business conditions, in particular corporate legitimacy (Amann, Khan, & Salzmann, 2007; Hennisz, 2004; Steger, 2003; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015). Therefore, Amann et al. (2007, p. 34) define CD as “the attempt to manage the business environment systematically and professionally, to ensure that business is done smoothly, with an unquestioned license to operate and an interaction that leads to mutual adaptation between corporations and society in a sense of coevolution.” Steger (2003, p. 20) likewise points out that CD is aimed at gaining legitimacy (‘the license to operate’) and therefore involves “meet[ing] the social and ecological expectations of society without sacrificing the mission, which is to generate a profit by satisfying market demands” (2003, p. 20). Similarly, some PD scholars define CD as corporate activities that address the challenges of international business management (Søndergaard, 2014) and refer to corporate diplomats as managers “functioning in various foreign cultures [...] and] essential for making multinational structures work” (Saner & Yiu, 2014, pp. 319-320).

In contrast, according to other scholars CD includes activities that go beyond a self-interested business approach and aim to address social and political issues and governance gaps in the company’s foreign countries (Mogensen, 2017; Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009; Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015). These authors view CD in a socio-political dimension and emphasize the relevance of CD for political decision-making processes, for instance, by putting their own issue on the political agenda of the government or of the society. Therefore, Mogensen (2017, p. 608) defines CD as “a relevant concept for activities which transnational corporations engage in, when they perceive an opportunity or a problem in a host country and try to develop a sustainable solution in collaboration with relevant stakeholders at all levels”. Similarly, Ordeix-Rigo and Duarte (2009, p. 555) define CD as “the capability that some major transnational corporations develop to draft and implement their own programs, independent

from the government's initiative, to pursue similar diplomatic aims". Furthermore, the authors highlight that CD is a stakeholder engagement instrument that enables companies to extend their power in the international arena.

Another research stream refers to CD as the PR efforts of multinational companies within their respective host country (Halevy, Ju, & Chou, 2018; Murphy & Smlarski, 2017; White et al., 2011). As such, the major concerns of CD are relationship building between companies and their key stakeholders, negotiation and dialogue (Macnamara, 2012; White et al., 2011). White et al. (2011) define CD as "corporate international public relations efforts to help create favorable conditions for business and to build relationships with those who can influence domestic policies of the country in which the company operates". For these reasons, CD includes instruments already utilized in international PR, such as corporate social responsibility, increasingly applied to political issues (Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017; White et al., 2011).

Later, White (2012, 2015; White & Kolesnicov, 2015) relates CD to PD and defines CD as "the role of private-sector corporations as non-state actors in public diplomacy" (White, 2015, p. 306). By engaging in CD, corporations can enhance their own image on the one hand, but also affect the company's home country image on the other. Therefore, CD can play an important role for PD and nation branding (White, 2012; White & Kolesnicov, 2015). For that reason, CD comprises citizen exchanges, cultural activities and private media broadcasts in order to intentionally or unintentionally "promote the national interest of a country by informing and influencing foreign audiences" (p. 307).

4.1.2 Political CSR definitions

The most prominent definition of PCSR, which is followed by several scholars across all disciplines, is given by Scherer and Palazzo (2011, p. 901), who define PCSR as "an extended model of governance with business firms contributing to global regulation and providing public goods [...] where private actors such as corporations and civil society organizations play an active role in the democratic regulation and control of market transactions". This research stream assumes that business actors leverage PCSR to contribute to society as "companies have social duties that go far beyond merely attending to stakeholders that are directly impacted by their decisions" (Stoll, 2015, p. 558). In this regard, scholars emphasize the need for corporate actors to participate in public discourse and to engage in deliberative processes (e.g. Ehrnström-Fuentes, 2016; Hussain

& Moriarty, 2016; Hofmann, Schleper, & Blome, 2015; Maak, Pless, & Voegtlin, 2016; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007; Seele & Lock, 2015; Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, Phillips, 2016). Therefore, PCSR is often generally conceptualized as the role of “corporations as political actors” (Wettstein & Baur, 2015, p. 204) that aim to contribute to socio-political issues in order to gain legitimacy (e.g. Acosta & Perezts, 2017; Baur & Schmitz, 2012; Bures, 2015; Husted, 2015; Palazzo & Scherer, 2008; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). For that reason, PCSR is defined as a form of “global governance in which private actors extend their activities from the economic realm to the political” (Acosta & Perezts, 2017, p. 1). By engaging in PCSR, companies take political responsibilities that were previously reserved for governments (Joutsenvirta & Vaara, 2015; Luyckx & Janssens, 2016). Taking this view, PCSR is outlined as a response to regulatory gaps and institutional pressure (Luyckx & Janssens, 2016; Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo, and Spicer, 2016, Stoll, 2015). Some scholars highlight the role of communication and refer to PCSR as ethical strategic communication (Lock et al., 2016; White et al., 2011). By communicating PCSR, companies aim to demonstrate their compliance with norms and values that “are defined by stakeholders’ expectations regarding responsibilities of organizations” in order to gain legitimacy (Lock et al., 2016, p. 91).

In contrast to these idealistic perspectives on PCSR, another research stream views PCSR as a corporate political strategy that is aimed primarily at gaining business advantages and avoiding unfavorable regulations (Edward & Willmott, 2008; Fooks, Gilmore, Collin, Holden, & Lee, 2013; Shirodkar, Beddewela, & Richter, 2016). As such, literature describes PCSR as extended corporate citizenship aimed towards the generation of financial returns for shareholders (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017; Uddin, Siddiqui, & Islam, 2016; Whelan, 2012). Moreover, within this perspective, PCSR can be defined as the “activities where CSR has an intended or unintended political impact, or where intended or unintended political impacts on CSR exist” (Frynas & Stephens, 2015, p. 485). Adopting the view of PCSR as business-driven political activities, a few scholars highlight the importance of engaging stakeholders in PCSR (Dawkins, 2015; Moog, Spicer, & Böhm, 2015; Rotter, Airike, & Mark-Herbert, 2016). Following this, PCSR is defined as corporate “collaboration and dialog with stakeholders and civil society actors” through incorporating “the role of deliberative democracy in contemporary business behavior” (Rotter, Airike, & Mark-Herbert, 2016, p. 581).

However, as some scholars note, PCSR can contribute to both the company and the society. By addressing both local government and society, corporations can affect stakeholder perceptions

while responding to the interests of local communities at the same time. As a result, corporations can enhance their own legitimacy and reputation and benefit the society as well (Liedong, Ghobadian, Rajwani, & O'Regan, 2014; Shirodkar, Beddewela, & Richter, 2016).

4.2 Theories in corporate diplomacy and political CSR research

4.2.1 Theories applied in corporate diplomacy research

In CD studies, about half of the articles or monographs did not apply any theories to CD. In the other half, we identified institutional, stakeholder, agency and political CSR theory as well as Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions. Applying institutional theory, scholars argue that the core challenge of CD is maintaining corporate legitimacy (Amann et al., 2007; Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009, Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017). According to Weber and Larsson-Olaison (2017), institutional theory helps to explain the reason why some business actors act in a socio-politically responsible way. Applied to CD, this "implies that corporations tend to fill voids created by the institutional setting of a country" in order to gain legitimacy (Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017, p. 371). Moreover, CD supports multinational corporations in meeting stakeholders' expectations regarding the company and its actions. As a result, companies can get a 'license to operate' and may "achieve their status of institutions within society" (Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009, p. 557).

In addition, other scholars embed CD within stakeholder theory. Accordingly, corporations engage in CD as a certain type of behavior that complies with stakeholder needs. As such, corporations strive to build relationships with their stakeholders, which in turn might influence a company's reputation, brand value and profit (Amann et al., 2007; Søndergaard, 2014). Moreover, Halevy et al. (2018) and Murphy and Smolarski (2017) argue that multinational companies fulfil stakeholder needs in order to protect their well-being, particularly in conflict-prone host countries. Søndergaard (2014), who combines stakeholder and agency theory, argues that agency theory contributes to CD "with the notion of contract relations linking the principal, the employer and the agent, together with the diplomat, and the goal and risk alignment between them" (Søndergaard, 2014, p 360). Therefore, CD managers who are aware of the principal-agent relationship are able to understand and fulfill their role "vis-à-vis the policy-makers or government of the country that they represent" (p. 364).

Saner and Yiu (2014) embed CD in Hofstede's cultural dimension theory. According to the authors, corporate diplomats should be familiar with the specificities of different corporate cultures and be experienced in living in foreign cultures. However, Saner and Yiu (2014) do not provide a detailed description of how exactly Hofstede's cultural dimension theory can be applied to CD. Søndergaard (2014, p. 360) also highlights the contribution of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions to CD as it offers a "framework for understanding cultural difference that would enable researchers to differentiate between the cultural backgrounds of stakeholders". Lastly, White et al. (2011) relate CD to political CSR theory in accordance with Scherer and Palazzo (2007) and argue that CD includes CSR activities that mitigate political issues, leading to the transformation of companies into political actors.

Description of corporate diplomacy	Theoretical embedding	Authors
<i>General Management</i>		
Corporate instrument of relationship-building with relevant stakeholder in order to manage corporate reputation	Institutional legitimacy theory Stakeholder theory	Amann et al. (2007)
Corporate conduct in the international arena aimed at participating in decision-making processes and influencing policy-making	No theory applied on corporate diplomacy	Westermann-Behaylo et al. (2015)
Proactive management tool of multinational companies aimed at gaining legitimacy and creating business value	No theory applied on corporate diplomacy	Henisz (2014) Steger (2003)
<i>Business Ethics</i>		
Corporate efforts to promote stakeholder well-being by contributing to conflict management in host countries	Stakeholder theory	Halevy et al. (2018) Murphy & Smolarski (2017)
<i>Public Relations</i>		
Companies' collaboration and direct engagement with the host country's public aimed at solving socio-political problems	No theory applied on corporate diplomacy	Macnamara (2012) Mogensen (2017)
CSR activities going beyond shareholder value maximization aimed at gaining legitimacy and influencing public opinion	Institutional theory	Weber & Larsson-Olaison (2017)
International PR of companies aimed at creating favorable business conditions and building relationships in order to influence foreign policies	Political CSR theory	White et al. (2011)
Companies' role in public diplomacy	No theory applied on corporate diplomacy	White (2015)

<i>Public Diplomacy</i>		
Corporations as non-state actors in public diplomacy aimed at enhancing the home country's image	No theory applied on corporate diplomacy	White (2012) White & Kolesnicov (2015)
Companies' capability to develop and implement own programs independently of governments in order to increase their power	Institutional theory	Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte (2009)
Corporate diplomats as multicultural and multilingual managers that coordinate the company in foreign countries	Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions	Saner & Yiu (2014)
Corporate activities that meet the challenges of international business management	Stakeholder theory Agency theory Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions	Søndergaard (2014)

Table 4. Main assumptions and theories on corporate diplomacy

4.2.2 Theories applied in political CSR research

Our systematic review reveals that the majority of PCSR scholars' literature applies Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy (often in relation to Habermas' theory of communicative action), followed by institutional and stakeholder theory, and Rawls' theory of social justice. Applying Habermas' perspective on deliberative democracy, numerous scholars suggest that companies proactively engage in PCSR and include all stakeholder groups in a discourse on social and political issues (e.g. Ehrnström & Fuentes, 2016; Palazzo & Scherer, 2007; Scherer et al., 2016; Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016). This theoretical embedding is used to explain how companies gain legitimacy by taking a political role (Sabadoz & Singer, 2017; Wagner & Seele, 2017). Accordingly, PCSR allows companies to participate in political decision-making processes in the form of a public discourse. Based on Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy, Scherer and Palazzo (2007) suggest four normative demands of PCSR, which are open discourse, participation, transparency and accountability. It is assumed that PCSR fulfilling these demands can reach a deliberative discourse, which is the basis of moral legitimacy (Lock et al., 2016).

Related to this, a few scholars apply Habermas' theory of communicative action to PCSR and highlight that "an organization can only be a good, hence deliberative, strategic communicator if it adheres to societal standards of (political) CSR" (Lock et al., 2016, p. 91). Therefore, applying Habermas' theory of communicative action, scholars suggest that PCSR communication needs to follow the four validity claims of truth, appropriateness, sincerity and comprehensibility in order to reach mutual understanding and trustful relationships (Seele &

Lock, 2015; Lock et al., 2016). Such communication requires that anyone may be able to participate and, in searching for the truth, accepts the better argument (Habermas, 1984).

Some scholars apply institutional theory to the concept of PCSR, either by referring to PCSR “as an institutional form, script and/or model, with the potential of being globalized” (Whelan, 2012, p. 710) or by outlining the importance of the respective institutional environment for companies and their actions. According to the latter, institutional factors force companies into interacting with external stakeholders and meeting their expectations (Shirodkar et al., 2016). Moreover, institutional theory is applied to PCSR to explain how PCSR is used as a discursive legitimation theory (Joutsenvirta & Vaara, 2015; Luyckx & Janssens, 2016). According to Luyckx and Janssens (2016), who examined the historical development of legitimation strategies of corporations, PCSR emerged as a legitimation strategy in recent years, through which companies aim at becoming institutionalized.

A few scholars apply stakeholder theory to PCSR, suggesting that corporate behavior affects multiple stakeholder groups and therefore has responsibility towards them (Detomasi, 2015; Dougherty & Olsen, 2014; Halevy et al., 2018; Murphy & Smolarski, 2017). Applying stakeholder theory, PCSR is aimed at balancing the needs of the stakeholders and the wants of the company itself (Murphy & Smolarski, 2017).

In addition, other theories that are applied to PCSR in some of the papers include Rawls’ theory of social justice and the division of moral labor (Arnold, 2013, Mäkinen & Kasanen; Mäkinen & Kourula, 2016), the neo-Gramscian concept of passive revolution (Gond et al., 2016; Gond & Nyberg, 2017; Levy, Reinecke, & Manning, 2016), Boltanskis and Thevenot’s economies of worth theory (Gond et al., 2016), Upper Echelon and agency theory (Maak et al., 2016), as well as the actor-network theory (Gond & Nyberg, 2017), resource dependence theory (Shirodkar et al., 2016) and Weber’s theory of social and economic organizations (Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017). Moreover, social constructivism (Morsing & Roepstorff, 2015) and concepts of power and hegemony (Dawkins, 2015; Moog et al. 2015; Whelan, 2017) as well as Young’s theory of social connection (Hennchen, 2015; Wickert, 2016) are applied to PCSR. As the application of these theories to PCSR occurs in only a few circumstances, they will not be further described.

Description of political CSR	Theoretical embedding	Authors
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<i>General Management</i>		
Corporate governance activities aimed at participating in a public discourse in order to gain legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy	Bo et al. (2018) Doh et al. (2012) Den Hond et al. (2014) Ehrnström-Fuentes (2016) Huber & Gilbert (2015) Maak et al. (2016) Palazzo & Scherer (2008) Reinecke & Asari (2015) Scherer et al. (2016) Scherer & Palazzo (2007) Scherer & Palazzo (2011) Schrempf-Stirling et al. (2016) Westermann-Behaylo et al. (2015)
Politicized notion of CSR; aimed at influencing governments in order to get competitive advantages	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy Institutional theory Legitimacy theory Neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony Rawls' theory of social justice Social contract theory Stakeholder theory	Edward & Willmott (2008) Frynas & Stephens (2015)
PCSR as a discursive process, through which companies turn into political actors; aimed at gaining legitimacy	Institutional theory	Joutsenvirta & Vaara (2015) Luyckx & Janssens (2016)
Interactive process of political accommodation aimed at enhancing corporate power; economic and normative values coevolve	Neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony	Levy et al. (2016)
Stakeholder groups engage in sustainability issues of international companies in order to influence the outcomes of corporate activities	Boltanski and Thévenot's economies of worth theory Lukes' concept of power	Gond & Nyberg (2017) Gond et al. (2016)
Corporate engagement in stakeholder dialogue to address social issues in a globalized world	Habermas' theory of communicative action	Ferraro & Beunza (2018)
<i>Business Ethics</i>		
Companies engage in deliberative processes aimed at providing public goods and contributing to the public discourse in order to gain legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy	Etchanchu & Djelic (2018) Hussain & Moriarty (2016) Hofmann et al. (2015) Ozkazanc-Pan (2018) Nyberg & Murray (2017) Sabadoz & Singer (2017) Schrempf-Stirling (2016) Seele & Lock (2015) Stoll (2015) Voegtlin & Scherer (2017) Wagner & Seele (2017) Wettstein & Baur (2016)
Companies as political actors aimed at influencing global governance and contributing to socio-political issues	Institutional theory	Acosta & Perezts (2017) Albareda et al. (2007) Baur & Schmitz (2012) Bures (2015) Husted (2015)

Corporate activities going beyond deliberative democracy; embedding PCSR within a modern liberal political system where business and society are interlocked and not separate	Rawls' theory of social justice	Arnold (2013) Kourula & Delalieux (2016) Mäkinen & Kasanen (2016) Mäkinen & Kourula (2012)
CSR activities on political issues that affect policy-making processes and allow the avoidance of unfavorable regulation	Resource dependence theory Institutional theory	Fooks et al. (2013) Shirodkar et al. (2016)
Extended corporate citizenship aimed at generating financial returns for shareholders, noting that the power of the state will remain	Weber's theory of social and economic organizations	Djelic & Etanchu (2017) Uddin et al. (2016) Whelan (2012)
Corporate political activities that strive to engage in a dialogue with the stakeholders, noting that less powerful stakeholders/communities are underrepresented in the discourse	Foucault's concepts of power Lukes' concept of power Neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony	Dawkins (2015) Moog et al. (2015) Whelan (2017)
Companies participating in governance activities aimed at benefitting the company itself	Stakeholder theory Institutional theory	Detomasi (2015) Dougherty & Olsen (2014) Néron (2016) Rotter et al. (2014)
Corporate engagement in political activities aimed at extending corporate power and influencing corporate reputation	Young's theory of social connection Social constructivism	Hennchen (2015) Morsing & Roepstorff (2015) Wickert (2016)
Proactive responses of companies to governmental regulation failures in order to protect the well-being of stakeholders	Stakeholder theory	Halevy et al. (2018) Murphy & Smolarski (2017)
<i>Public Relations</i>		
Corporate responsibilities through which companies get involved with issues that are relevant for the local community of a host country	Political CSR theory	White et al. (2011)
PCSR as "shared strategic communication" in order to support the organization and society at the same time, aimed at gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of communicative action	Lock et al. (2016)

Table 5. Main assumptions and theories on political CSR

4.3 Differences and commonalities of CD and PCSR

As our systematic review revealed, there are several differences as well as commonalities between the given definitions of and approaches to CD and PCSR. While CD is predominantly described as an instrument of multinational companies in those companies' host countries (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015), PCSR is understood in both a national and international context (Palazzo & Scherer, 2008; Shirodkar et al., 2016). Another difference is the underlying concept of "political", which is paramount in PCSR literature but less prevalent in the CD literature. PCSR assumptions draw heavily on the role of companies as a "quasi-governmental actor" (Aßländer, 2011, p. 118)

by referring to PCSR as an “extended model of governance with business firms contributing to global regulation and providing public goods” (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011, p. 901). In contrast, CD does not explicitly build on the assumption that companies take the role of governmental institutions. Instead, through CD companies become part of the (host country’s) political arena and “behave more and more as gatekeepers at an upper level conditioning the political agenda” (Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009, p. 561).

As PCSR attracts much more interest from the field of business ethics than CD does, PCSR is related more frequently to political theories than CD, particularly to the Habermasian philosophy. Related to this, when presenting PCSR most scholars refer to various theories, especially from political philosophy. In contrast, CD scholars rarely embed the construct theoretically. Most of the CD scholars focus instead on the practical implications of CD for the company and its stakeholders. While several PCSR scholars apply normative approaches to the construct, CD scholars mainly refer to the concept as an instrumental strategy. The term “instrumental” is used in the sense of how corporate activities in the realm of CD and PCSR can help to “satisfy the economic needs of the company first” (Lock & Seele, 2016, p. 405). In contrast, the current paper refers to “normative” as what is perceived to be an ‘ideal’ approach concerning the political responsibilities of companies and highlights that businesses take a political role by going beyond self-interests. Hence, PCSR literature very frequently discusses the reasons for the political engagement of companies and the contribution of PCSR to society, while CD literature puts a particular emphasis on the outcomes and benefits for a company.

Apart from these differences, the two constructs have numerous commonalities. The main similarities are, firstly, the efforts and activities that CD and PCSR comprise, and secondly, the goals of CD and PCSR for the company. Both CD and PCSR can be described as a corporate activity with a political impact. Here, the term “political” is understood in a broader sense and includes environmental and social issues such as education, health, sustainability, security or labor issues (Bures, 2015; Luyckx & Janssens, 2016; Scherer et al., 2016). The literature on both CD and PCSR points out that companies engage in decision-making processes in order to build relationships and gain legitimacy (Shirodkar et al., 2016; Steger, 2003; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015). Depending on the academic discipline exploring the term PCSR, some scholars also emphasize that companies engage in political activities in order to generate financial returns (Whelan, 2012) or have other competitive advantages (Frynas & Stephens, 2015). This is similar

to the majority of CD scholars, who point out that the goals of CD are generating favorable conditions for the company (Asquer, 2012) and maximizing profit (White & Kolesnicov, 2015). Besides this, both CD and PCSR are described as instruments of stakeholder and reputation management (Asquer, 2012; Henisz, 2014; Liedong et al., 2014; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007; Wickert, 2016). Another commonality of CD and PCSR is that both enhance access to governmental decision-makers and enable the (re-)shaping of the political environment of a company (Fooks et al., 2013; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015). Table 6 summarizes differences and commonalities of CD and PCSR.

	Corporate Diplomacy	Political CSR
<i>Differences</i>		
Context	International	National and international
Perspective	Particularly instrumental	Instrumental and normative
Motives	Benefits for the company and the home country	Benefits for the society
Role of the company	Company as powerful actor in the political arena	Company as a quasi-governmental actor
<i>Commonalities</i>		
Involved actors	Companies addressing governments, NGOs, other companies and social actors	
Common goals	Building relationships with various stakeholders and the society in general Gaining legitimacy Getting access to governmental decisions Minimizing political conflicts (that could have an impact on the company itself)	
Common core mission	Influencing (political) decision-making processes	

Table 6. Comparison of corporate diplomacy and political CSR

5. Discussion

5.1 Redefining corporate diplomacy and political CSR

Building on the results of the analysis, we define PCSR as corporate activities – on a national and international level, where companies turn into quasi-governmental actors – aimed at the provision of public goods and contribution to society. CD is regarded as a corporate instrument of multinational companies, where companies use different activities such as (political) CSR, but which can also include other activities with other aims. We define CD as the corporate activities of multinational companies, which are directed at the host country's key stakeholders and aimed at

participating in decision-making processes on relevant socio-political issues and building relationships in order to gain corporate legitimacy.

Both CD and PCSR can be regarded as a valid means of responding to changing social demands and institutional pressure. By advocating for a particular socio-political issue or developing MSIs with governmental, private or social actors, companies take part in ongoing debates on socio-political issues and meet social expectations (Macnamara, 2012; Steger, 2003; Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015). Thereby, companies take on a societal and political role rather than a merely economic one and go beyond shareholder value maximization (Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017).

5.2 Towards an integrative theoretical framework on corporate diplomacy

As the conceptual framework section of the current paper highlights, PR and PD, as well as PCSR theory, all contribute to CD. In this chapter, we build an integrative theoretical framework of CD, arguing that CD is at the intersection of PCSR, international PR and PD.

International PR

International PR research is understood as “the study of PR practices and the structures and processes of internationally operating organizations or companies” (Ingenhoff & Ruehl, 2013, p. 2) and thus comprises PR theories. International PR research helps to inform the understanding and theoretical framework of CD in several ways, which are mainly related to relationship management, dialogue and organizational legitimacy. The overall aim of CD is corporate legitimacy (Mogensen, 2017; Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte, 2009), which is also promoted as a main goal of reflective and neo-institutional approaches to PR (Sandhu, 2009; van Ruler & Vercic, 2005). Embedding CD in reflective and neo-institutional PR approaches thus makes a significant contribution to our theoretical framework of CD by exploring it as a communicative legitimization process. Accordingly, by involving reflective processes in order to gain social legitimization, CD communication is responsible for demonstrating the alignment of the company to its stakeholders.

Another main aspect of CD is the relationship, defined as “the state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political, and/or cultural well-being of the other entity” (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, p. 62), and also a key element of contemporary PR. Accordingly, PR is aimed at establishing a mutually

beneficial relationship with the stakeholders (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). This approach highlights the role of the company's stakeholders in CD. Related to this, the role of dialogue in PR (Kent & Taylor, 2002; van Ruler & Vercic, 2005) informs the concept of CD by going one step further through emphasizing CD as a two-way communication approach.

Public diplomacy

PD research contributes to our theoretical framework of CD by building on three components: relationship building in the host country, soft power and country image. As with PR research, one important characteristic of contemporary PD is relationship building (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Gregory, 2008; Zaharna, 2010), which has already been explained in the previous section. Furthermore, the main goal of PD is understanding and influencing public attitudes and opinions in a way that is supportive to the interests of a country (Gilboa, 2008; Gregory, 2008, 2011). This can be summarized as soft power in referring to a nation's "culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies" (Nye, 2008, pp. 95-96). Although soft power is traditionally related to a country, it can be argued that the concept of soft power can augment the theoretical framework of CD. This is due to the fact that corporate engagement in societally and politically relevant issues in terms of CD can firstly build up a corporate culture that might be perceived as attractive to the host country's public, and secondly, allow corporations to demonstrate their political values by engaging in CD. Hence, potential perceptions resulting from CD (such as an attractive corporate culture or appropriate political values) can contribute to the soft power of a company.

While several scholars point out that PD efforts contribute to the perception of a country (Ingenhoff, Buhmann, White, Zhang, & Kioussis, 2018; White, 2012; White, 2015), other researchers assume that country image can also affect the perception of a company and its products, known as country-of-origin-effect (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Han, 1989). Thus, we argue that the country-of-origin theory can contribute to our theoretical framework through the potential spillover effects from a company's home country image to the perception of their CD activities.

Political CSR

Applying PCSR enhances the understanding of CD in several aspects, which are related to the specific nature of issues that are “political”², moral legitimacy and decision-making. Following Scherer et al. (2016), companies turn into political actors by contributing to global governance. According to this, CD issues are political when they contribute to global legal regulations. Furthermore, from a PCSR perspective, CD as participation in global governance goes beyond an instrumental view of the business firm. Therefore, CD can be considered as corporate activities that improve social welfare and serve both the company and the society. Lastly, embedding CD in a PCSR framework expands the understanding of legitimacy, which is an essential goal of CD. As Scherer and Palazzo (2011) emphasize, by engaging in open decision-making processes on socio-political issues, PCSR is primarily concerned with gaining moral legitimacy. Applying this view, CD can be regarded as a decision-making process that enables the company to be perceived as morally legitimate. Figure 1 summarizes how each of the integrating disciplines contributes to our understanding of CD.

5.3 Implications

Our proposed theoretical framework has several implications for CD practice and future research in PR and PD. Considering CD as a dialogic relationship cultivation process, as discussed in both PR and PD research, highlights the role of the company’s stakeholders. Accordingly, we propose that CD engagement should be oriented towards stakeholder needs including considering their expectations as well as the consequences of the CD engagement for the stakeholders. Therefore, we suggest that dialogue is central for CD efforts as it helps with learning about and addressing stakeholder demands, and thus it helps demonstrate the congruency between the stakeholder expectations towards the CD issue and the organizational actions. This in turn can enable corporate legitimation processes (Suchman, 1995). In this context, future research is necessary to explore if and how CD is used to fulfill stakeholder demands and to what extent CD involves stakeholder engagement. Moreover, further research can explore the legitimation process of CD and examine

² “Political” activities are understood as activities that have an impact on politics or where politics have an impact on the activities (Frynas & Stephens, 2015).

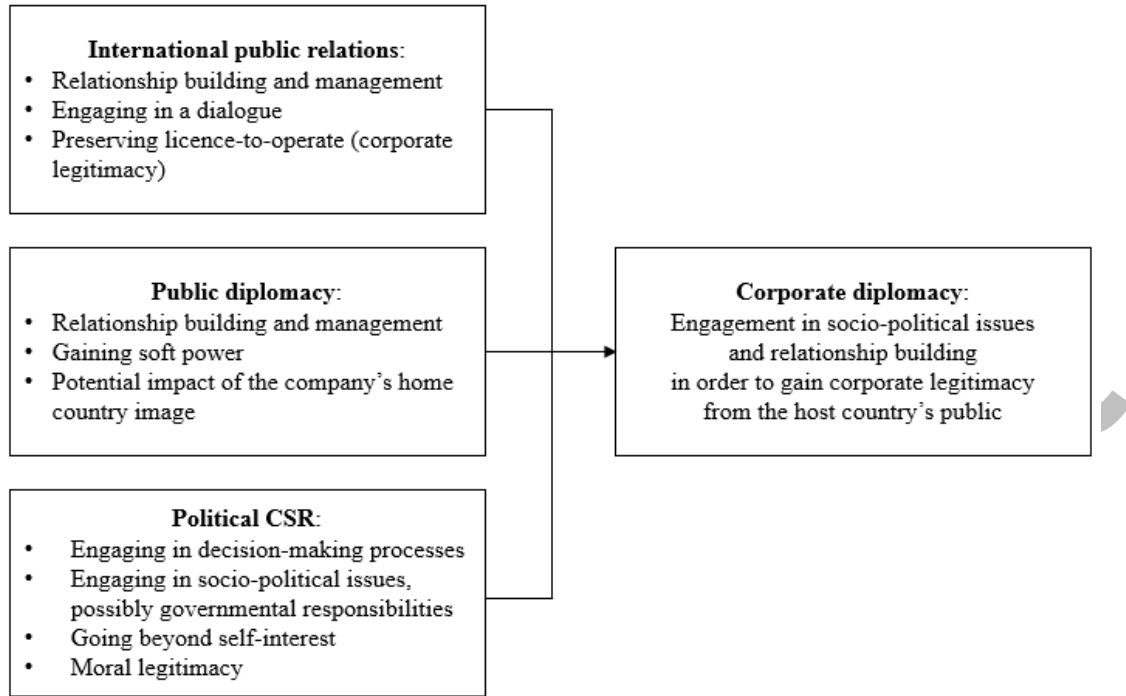


Figure 1: Contributions of international PR, PD and PCSR to CD

empirically whether CD directly influences corporate legitimacy and whether there are differences among different stakeholder groups.

Besides its implications for international PR, the current study contributes to “new public diplomacy”, which includes non-state actors such as corporations. Our conceptualization of CD includes various communication tools that can be adopted by PD actors, such as the concept of “shared strategic communication” (Lock et al., 2016). Accordingly, PD activities using shared strategic communication involve various stakeholder groups and thus PD would not only benefit the nation state but also social actors participating in the discourse on public issues, which might lead to a more credible perception of PD efforts. Moreover, applying the relational approaches of PD to CD might help in developing concrete efforts that CD could include in order to build relationships, for instance public-private partnerships. These partnerships including multinational companies and host governments can serve both the company and the host country's public and are therefore relevant for both CD and PD. By collaborating with social and governmental actors in the host country, companies can manage their relationships with stakeholders, which also helps to enhance the international PR of corporations. Within developing or transitional countries in particular, where the state potentially possesses great authority but gaps in governmental regulation

exist, it seems reasonable for a corporation to collaborate with the government to influence decision-making, as this can benefit the society. Future research might explore how partnerships with different stakeholder groups such as other companies, the host country's government, NGOs or citizens helps CD in building good relationships. Moreover, future studies could examine if different forms of partnership (e.g., depending on public, private or individual partners) have an effect on the perception of CD including corporate legitimacy.

Furthermore, as outlined previously, CD can influence, intentionally or unintentionally, the company's home country image (White, 2012, 2015), but at the same time the home country image can have an impact on the perception of the company and its CD activities. However, these image transfer effects depend on the level of association between the companies and the nation states they originate in, which can be described as entitativity (Ingenhoff & Buhmann, 2017). Therefore, future research may address the question of to what extent the CD affects the company's home country image and vice versa.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the systematic review show that the concepts of CD and PCSR are increasingly discussed by scholars from different disciplines and emphasize that research lacks a distinctive definition and substantial theoretical foundation for CD. In contrast, PCSR research offers a variety of theoretical foundations. Following Westermann-Behaylo et al. (2015), who state that PCSR enhances the research on CD, the current paper compares both constructs and states a distinctive definition of CD in comparison to PCSR. Furthermore, we suggest a theoretical framework on CD that integrates PCSR, PR and PD theories and approaches. Our results imply several contributions of PCSR to CD research.

First, our contribution provides a refined and comprehensive definition of CD. As scholars point out, empirical research on CD is very rare (Weber & Larsson-Olaison, 2017; White, 2012), which is potentially related to the lack of a conclusive definition. For this reason, our definition can serve as a foundation for the operationalization of the construct. We propose a definition of CD that combines PD, international PR and PCSR referring to the political responsibility companies take towards their stakeholders in the company's host country. By emphasizing CD as the engagement in societal and political issues that are relevant for the company's key stakeholders, we highlight that CD goes beyond self-interest towards societal contribution. Moreover, our paper

demonstrates that CD is more than just the role that companies play in PD and more than just a PR management tool. However, as illustrated, both PD and PR are essential to understand the elements of CD, and CD can play an important role in PD and PR research and practice.

Second, despite its conceptual nature, our study offers some insights into how corporations take political responsibility and manage the business environment through CD, and what rationales and objectives companies have when engaging in CD. We suggest that by addressing socio-political issues that are relevant for the company's stakeholders in the host country, CD is an appropriate means to respond to external pressure and social expectations in order to build and maintain corporate legitimacy. The legitimacy test usually takes place in the mediated public arena and PR practitioners traditionally represent the business firms and their interests (L'Etang, 2009; Schönhagen & Meißner, 2016). By engaging in CD and focusing on specific political issues, companies can elude this process to some extent and impact public attention directly (Mogensen, 2017; Stoker & Rawlins, 2005). Therefore, our understanding of CD in light of PCSR contributes to institutional PR theory and other PR approaches that claim legitimacy as the core concept in PR.

While companies taking a political role is not a completely new phenomenon, neither CD nor PCSR have been discussed extensively in PR and PD research until recently. Due to the decreasing power of governments (Kobrin, 2009), corporate actors play an increasingly important role in global governance. This has led to the need to explore CD and PCSR in the realm of PD and PR research and it will certainly require more efforts, in particular empirical studies, to understand if, how and when companies can use and communicate CD and PCSR. Besides this, it is important to link CD and PCSR theories to corporate practice to find evidence of whether and why multinational companies use CD and PCSR in foreign countries. For this purpose, our systematic review can serve as a foundation.

Appendix

Journal/Book	Author(s)	Year	Description	Goals	Theory
GENERAL MANAGEMENT					
Academy of Management Review (AMR)	-	-	-	-	-
Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)	-	-	-	-	-
Academy of Management Perspective (AMP)	Westermann-Behaylo, Rehbein, & Fort	2015	Corporate conduct in the international arena, especially in challenging political and social environments; usually proactive	Gaining legitimacy Solving political conflicts Private and public benefits in host countries	Political CSR
Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of General Management (JGM)	Amann, Khan, Salzmann, Steger, & Ionescu-Somers	2007	Managing the business environment in order to get a license to operate	Managing external pressure Gaining legitimacy	Legitimacy theory Stakeholder theory
Journal of Management (JM)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Management Studies (JMS)	-	-	-	-	-
International Journal of Management Review (IJMR)	-	-	-	-	-
Organization Studies (OS)	-	-	-	-	-
Organization Science (OSC)	-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)	-	-	-	-	-
Monograph: Steger, U. (2003). Corporate diplomacy: the strategy for a volatile, fragmented business environment. Chichester; Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.	Steger	2003	Proactive management tool of multinational companies aimed at gaining legitimacy and creating business value	Gaining legitimacy	No theory applied to CD

Monograph: Henisz, W: (2014). Corporate Diplomacy: Building Reputations and Relationships with External Stakeholders. Sheffield: Greenleaf.	Henisz	2014	Proactive management tool of multinational companies aimed at gaining legitimacy and creating business value	Building relationships Reputation management	No theory applied to CD
BUSINESS ETHICS					
Journal of Business Ethics (JBE)	Halevy, Jun, & Chou	2018	Proactive response of a multinational companies to state governance failures, especially in conflict-prone host countries	Contributing to solving conflicts and contributing to social well-being	Stakeholder theory
Business Ethics Quarterly (BEQ)	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Governance: An International Review (CG)	-	-	-	-	-
Business & Society (BS)	Murphy & Smolarski	2017	Moral obligation of companies to engage in global governance, to utilize corporate diplomacy when operating in politically and socially challenging developing world contexts (Westermann-Behaylo, Rehbein, & Fort, 2015).	Helping to resolve social and political conflicts	Stakeholder theory
Accounting, Organization & Society (AOS)	-	-	-	-	-
POLITICAL ECONOMY					
Business & Politics (BP)	-	-	-	-	-
International Affairs (IA)	-	-	-	-	-
Socio-Economic Review (SER)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Economics & Management Strategy (JEMS)	-	-	-	-	-
PUBLIC RELATIONS					
Public Relations Review (PRR)	Mogensen	2017	Transnational companies engaging in activities in order to solve problems in host country	Claiming and maintaining legitimacy Creating sustainable solutions	Concept of soft power

Journal of Public Relations Research (JPRR)	-	-	-	-	-
Public Relations inquiry (PRI)	White	2015	Corporations acting as non-state actors in public diplomacy	Maximizing profit Reputation and image management	Concept of soft power Global corporate citizenship
Public Relations Journal (PRJ)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Communication Management (JCM)	Macnamara	2012	Corporations engaging in an ongoing dialogue with their publics	Balancing power Amortizing conflicts Maintaining relationships	Not mentioned
	Weber & Larsson-Olaison	2017	Multinational companies and entrepreneurs taking responsibility for the society; beyond shareholder value maximization; CSR reports as indicator in regard to refugee crisis 2015	Gaining legitimacy Influencing public opinion Changing societal expectations	Institutional theory
International Journal of Strategic Communication (IJSC)	White, Vanc, & Coman	2011	Corporations influencing political decisions in the host country, engaging in political CSR as political dimension of CSR, esp. in developing countries to affect societies that are in transition; private sector participation in PD; international PR efforts of companies through CSR activities that go beyond profit-driven motives and are concerned with building relationships with the community in the host country	Creating favorable conditions for the company Building relationships with actors that can influence policy-making in the host country	Political CSR Global corporate citizenship
Journal of International Communication (JIC)	-	-	-	-	-
International Communication Gazette (ICG)					
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY					

	Saner & Yiu	2014	Corporate diplomats as "Home country or other nationals who are impregnated with the corporate culture, are multilingual, from various occupational backgrounds, and who are experienced in living and functioning in various foreign cultures. They are essential for making multinational structures work, as liaison persons in the various head offices, or as temporary managers for new ventures." (p. 319/320)	Coordination of the MNE in foreign countries	Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions
	Søndergaard	2014	Companies meeting "prime challenges in international business organizations of simultaneous global integration, local and professional differentiation, and worldwide learning and knowledge-sharing" (p. 357)	Managing external stakeholders	Stakeholder theory Agency theory
Place Branding and Public Diplomacy (PBDP)	White	2012	Companies as non-state actors in public diplomacy	Enhancing country image of the home country	Concept of soft power
	White, & Kolesnicov	2015	The role of corporations in public diplomacy	Building relationships Enhancing the image of the corporations' home country Nation branding	Concept of soft power
American Behavioral Scientist (ABS)	Ordeix-Rigo & Duarte	2009	Companies' capability to develop and implement own programs, independent from governments	Extending corporate power Positioning the company as institution Stakeholder management	Institutional theory
International Journal of Communication (IJC)	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2. Data extraction matrix on Corporate Diplomacy

Journal/Book	Author(s)	Year	Description	Goals	Theory
GENERAL MANAGEMENT					
Academy of Management Review (AMR)	Palazzo & Scherer	2008	Corporations participating in global governance with and without governments resulting in a growing impact on democratic institutions	Gaining legitimacy Global regulation Providing public goods	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Edward & Willmott	2008	Politicized and democratized notion of CSR	Not mentioned	No theory applied to PCSR
	Scherer & Palazzo	2007	Deliberative concept of CSR, where companies proactively engage in public issues; stakeholder engagement based on Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy, with all kinds stakeholders included, not only shareholders, customers, employees and suppliers but also civil society and community groups as well as NGOs	Preempting potential conflicts Stakeholder management Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Philipps	2016	Deliberative concept of CSR, where companies proactively engage in public issues	Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)	-	-	-	-	-
Academy of Management Perspective (AMP)	Doh, Lawton, & Rajwani	2012	The role of private firms as active participants in emerging forms of global governance	Contributing to environmental and social issues	No theory applied to PCSR
	Westermann-Behaylo, Rehbein, & Fort	2015	Political role of companies, going beyond self-interest by emphasizing the role of non-financial values, esp. in developing countries - when governments are not able to address social issues sufficiently	Gaining legitimacy Improving governance	No theory applied to PCSR
Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ)	-	-	-	-	-

Journal of General Management (JGM)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Management (JM)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Management Studies (JMS)	den Hond, Rehbein, de Bakker, & Kooijmans-van Lankveld	2014	Companies taking a governmental role, CSR being political in a broad sense	Securing favorable political conditions for their businesses.	No theory applied to PCSR
	Ehrnström-Fuentes	2016	Collaborations of companies with other private and societal actors as part of deliberation processes	Gaining (moral) legitimacy	Habermas' theory of communicative action
	Gond, Cruz, Raufflet, & Charron	2016	Corporate activities seeking legitimacy and engaging stakeholder; stakeholder groups shaping moral legitimacy of sustainability issues in order to find a consensus; on the other hand, this seems to be utopian, because stakeholders differ in their power	Gaining legitimacy	Boltanskis and Thevenot's economies of worth theory with Lukes' concept of power
	Levy, Reinecke, & Manning	2016	Process of political accommodation of business actors; negotiation to challenge the value regime, in which economic and normative values coevolve	Shaping political issues	Neo-Gramscian concepts of hegemony and passive revolution
	Maak, Pless, & Voegtlin	2016	Companies taking governmental responsibilities	Influencing policy-making processes and regulation	Upper echelon theory Agency theory
	Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo, & Spicer	2016	Business activities that turn corporations into political actors, corporate engagement in public deliberations	Participating in a public discourse and finding consensus	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Scherer & Palazzo	2011	Companies going beyond instrumental arguments or legal requirements for CSR	Gaining legitimacy Participating in governance	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
International Journal of Management Review (IJMR)	Frynas & Stephens	2015	CSR activities with an intended or unintended political impact; influencing governments in order to get competitive advantages;	Influencing governments in order to get competitive advantages Changing the political environment	Institutional theory Stakeholder theory Legitimacy theory Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy

			changing the political environment		Social contract theory Rawls' theory of social justice Neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony
Organization Studies (OS)	Gond & Nyberg	2017	Companies substitute for government in globalized times	Gaining legitimacy Building power	Actor-network theory
	Joutsenvirta & Vaara	2015	Discursive process of companies, embedded in international relations	Gaining legitimacy	Institutional theory
	Luyckx & Janssens	2016	Multinational corporations as political actors engaged in activities previously reserved for governments	Gaining legitimacy	Institutional theory
Organization Science (OSC)	Ferraro & Beunza	2018	Corporate engagement in dialogue to address complex social challenges in a globalized world	Contributing to social welfare	Habermas theory of communicative action
Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)	-	-	-	-	-
Book: Blowfield, M., Karam, C. & Jamali, D. (2017). Development Oriented Corporate Social Responsibility, Volume 1, Multinational Corporations and the Global Context (pp. 228 -246). Sheffield, UK: Greanleaf.	Huber & Gilbert	2015	Proactive corporate engagement in dialogue with its stakeholders in order to participate in democratic will formation	Contributing to social development	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
BUSINESS ETHICS					
Journal of Business Ethics (JBE)	Acosta & Perezts	2017	Companies take state-like responsibilities, providing public goods	Influencing global governance	Institutional theory
	Albareda, Lazosa, & Ysa	2007	Governments involve business actors addressing social challenges and engaging in community development	Influencing social and environmental issues	No theory applied to PCSR
	Baur & Schmitz	2012	Business actors as political actors	Contributing to solving societal and environmental problems	No theory applied to PCSR

	Bures	2015	Corporate responsibilities for political tasks	Contributing to solving societal problems	Several theories discussed: institutional theory, Rawls' theory of justice, Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Detomasi	2015	Companies participating in governance activities in order to fill governmental gaps in regulation	Benefitting the company	Stakeholder theory
	Djelic & Etchanchu	2017	Extended corporate citizenship	Generating financial returns for shareholders	Weber's theory of social and economic organizations
	Dougherty & Olsen	2014	Deliberative concept of CSR	Satisfying stakeholders' needs, particularly local communities' needs	Stakeholder theory
	Etchanchu & Djelic	2018	Governance by private actors	Gaining legitimacy	Habermas's notion of deliberative democracy
	Fooks, Gilmore, Collin, Holden, & Lee	2013	Companies' (political) activities that affect decisions about political issues	Affecting political stakeholders Managing stakeholders' perceptions Shaping the agenda of the policy-building process	No theory applied to PCSR
	Halevy, Jun, & Chou	2018	The proactive response of corporations to state governance failures in the company's host country	Enhancing the well-being of stakeholders in the host country	Stakeholder theory
	Hennchen	2015	Political role of companies	Global expansion of the company, extending power	Young's social connection model
	Hofmann, Schleper, & Blome	2015	Companies going beyond instrumental arguments in order to provide public goods and participate in governance	Gaining legitimacy	Different theories mentioned: Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy, institutional theory, or Rawlsian

					considerations on justice
	Hussain & Moriarty	2016	Companies engaging in deliberative process	Finding consensus Contributing to the public discourse Getting democratic control	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Kourula & Delalieux	2016	Societal and political role of companies, CSR practices with the help of civil society organizations interpreted as a way to secure hegemony	Preserving the economic interests of the company	Gramscian framework of hegemony
	Mäkinen & Kasanen	2016	Corporate activities going beyond deliberative democracy; embedding PCSR within a modern liberal political system where business and society are interlocked and not separate	Participating in global governance	Rawls' theory of justice
	Moog, Spicer, & Böhm	2015	Corporate participation in MSIs can best be understood as a shift in corporate political strategies	Shaping political issues	Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony
	Morsing & Roepstorff	2015	Corporate engagement in the macro-political sphere and in policymaking	Shaping corporate identity and image	Social constructivism
	Néron	2016	Political tasks and responsibilities of corporations	Benefitting the company	No theory applied to PCSR
	Ozkazanc-Pan	2018	The political nature of CSR; going beyond social aims	Legitimacy building through ethical decision-making	Habermas's notion of deliberative democracy
	Rotter, Airike, & Mark-Herbert	2014	Extended responsibilities of companies in a globalized context	Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Schrempp-Stirling	2016	Global governance forms organized by non-state actors; political responsibilities as "activities that enable, facilitate, and protect citizenship rights" (p. 2)	Providing public goods Filling gaps in regulation	No theory applied to PCSR

	Seele & Lock	2015	Discursive, accountable, participatory and transparent communication between companies as political actors and various social actors	Gaining legitimacy and credibility Finding consensus on socio-political issues	Habermas' theory of communicative action
	Shirodkar, Beddewela, & Richter	2016	CSR activities aimed at gaining political leverage in order to avoid unfavorable regulation	Affecting policymaking processes Building relationships and reputation Reducing external dependence on critical resources	Resource dependence theory Institutional theory
	Stoll	2015	Engaging in activities that were traditionally performed by governments; corporate responsibilities that go beyond attending to stakeholders which are directly influenced by the company's decisions	Affecting public policy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Uddin, Siddiqui, & Azizul Islam	2016	Extended corporate citizenship	Generating financial returns for shareholders	Weber's traditionalism
	Voegtlin & Scherer	2017	Companies' role in global governance; engaging in social and environmental issues	Providing public goods	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Wagner & Seele	2017	Companies' role in global governance; engaging in social and environmental issues	Providing public goods Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
	Wettstein & Baur	2016	Corporations as political actors; role of companies in new governance	Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
Business Ethics Quarterly (BEQ)	Arnold	2013	Companies as agents of global justice	Gaining legitimacy	Rawls' theory of justice
	Dawkins	2015	Political role of companies; activities that enable stakeholder engagement	Mitigating power asymmetries	Agonist theory
	Husted	2015	Business actors providing governmental services, in the context of institutional voids	Providing public goods	No theory applied to PCSR
	Mäkinen & Kourula	2012	Companies taking governmental responsibilities	Providing public goods	Rawls' theory of justice
	Sabadoz & Singer	2017	Companies participate in decision-making processes, by engaging their stakeholders	Benefitting the society Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy

	Schreck, Aaken, & Donaldson	2013	Only mentioned, not further described	Not mentioned	No theory applied to PCSR
	Whelan	2012	Political model of corporate governance	Benefitting the company	Institutional theory
Corporate Governance: An International Review (CG)	-		-	-	-
Business & Society (BS)	Murphy & Smolarski	2017	Companies taking on moral obligation to help citizens concerning their human rights in cases of government failure	Helping the society to achieve socioeconomic development, protecting human rights	Stakeholder theory
	Nyberg & Murray	2017	Corporate political activity beyond government regulation; political nature of firms' engagement in society	Gaining legitimacy	No theory applied to PCSR
	Whelan	2017	Political role of companies	Not mentioned	Neo-Gramscian theory Deleuzian and Guattarian theory Foucauldian theory
	Wickert	2016	Companies taking a quasi-governmental role	Addressing regulatory gaps Relationship building Reputation management	Young's social connection model
Accounting, Organization & Society (AOS)	-	-	-	-	-
POLITICAL ECONOMY					
Business & Politics (BP)	-	-	-	-	-
International Affairs (IA)	-	-	-	-	-
Socio-Economic Review (SER)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Economics & Management Strategy (JEMS)	-	-	-	-	-
PUBLIC RELATIONS					
Public Relations Review (PRR)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Public Relations Research (JPRR)	-	-	-	-	-

Public Relations inquiry (PRI)	-	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Journal (PRJ)	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Communication Management (JCM)	-	-	-	-	-
International Journal of Strategic Communication (IJSC)	White, Vanc, & Coman	2011	Companies engaging in political issues that are relevant to local communities	Influencing policy making processes, regulation	Global corporate citizenship
	Lock, Seele, & Heath	2016	Political role of companies, where they engage in global public issues	Gaining legitimacy	Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy
Journal of International Communication (JIC)	-		-		
International Communication Gazette (ICG)	-		-		
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY					
The Hague Journal of Diplomacy (HJD)	-		-		
Place Branding and Public Diplomacy (PBPD)	-		-		
American Behavioral Scientist (ABS)	-		-		
International Journal of Communication (IJC)	-		-		

Table 3. Data extraction matrix on Political CSR

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